

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 EB-08 COME-00 TRSE-00 STR-05 /070 W

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FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5595

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 14852

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ESTC, PGOV, NI

SUBJECT: NIGERIAN BOYCOTT AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA

REF: LAGOS 14169

1. AS 1977 ENDS, OFFICIAL NIGERIAN DETERMINATION TO IMPOSE A BOYCOTT AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA ON FOREIGN COMPANIES APPEARS TO BE EBBING. THE FIRST MEETING OF THE FMG BOYCOTT COMMITTEE IN SEVERAL WEEKS TOOK PLACE ON DECEMBER 21. VIEWS IN THE COMMITTEE HAVE POLARIZED BETWEEN THE MEA MEMBER AND THE CABINET OFFICE CHAIRMAN, AND THE FORMER APPEARS TO BE HAVING HIS WAY. IN FREQUENT CLOSE CONTACT WITH THE EMBASSY, THE MEA OFFICIAL SUPPORTS AMERICAN POSITION AND HAS ARGUED AGAINST THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ANY FORMAL BOYCOTT REGULATIONS WHICH WOULD PROHIBIT FOREIGN COMPANIES FROM TRADE AND INVESTMENT WITH NIGERIA IF THEY HAD DEALINGS WITH SOUTH AFRICA.

2. MEA OFFICIAL POINTS OUT THAT IN ADDITION TO INTER-MINISTERIAL CABINET OFFICERS. THE LATTER GROUP IS SUPPOSED TO SERVE AS A SUPPORTING ARM TO THE COMMITTEE BUT PREFERS TO PLAY AT BEING ANOTHER ADVISORY GROUP. SOURCE DESCRIBES THEM AS 'NOT ONLY PRETENTIOUS' BECAUSE THEY REPORT DIRECTLY TO YAR 'ADUA, BUT ALSO 'VERY RADICAL' IN THEIR THINKING. THEY HAVE CONSISTENTLY BEEN

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THE HARD-LINERS AGAINST MEA AND THE ECONOMIC MINISTRIES. THE MINISTRIES, IN TURN, INCREASINGLY RECOMMEND CAUTION IN FORMULATING RESTRICTIONS.

3. AS OF DECEMBER 23, THE PROPOSED FMG COURSE OF ACTION FOR THE CABINET TO SEND LETTERS TO ALL FOREIGN COMPANIES DOING BUSINESS IN NIGERIA ASKING THEM TO STATE WHETHER OR NOT THEY HAD ANY

DEALINGS WITH SOUTH AFRICA. THE COMPANIES WOULD NOT BE ASKED TO MAKE A STATEMENT PROMISING NO FUTURE RELATIONS WITH SOUTH AFRICA. THE MINISTRY OF TRADE IS BEING ASSIGNED JOB OF IDENTIFYING THE COMPANIES, A TASK WHICH OUR FMG SOURCES SEE AS TAKING 'MONTHS IF EVER' TO DO ACCURATELY. OUR MEA INFORMANTS SEE THE OPERATION AS A FACE-SAVING MEASURE AND NOTHING MORE.

4. MEA BOYCOTT COMMITTEE MEMBER FURTHER POINTS OUT THAT ENTHUSIASM AMONG GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS INVOLVED IN THE BOYCOTT ISSUE HAS WAINED CONSIDERABLY SINCE AUGUST. OFFICIALS HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY AWARE OF THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL PITFALLS INVOLVED IN A BOYCOTT AND ALSO HAVE BECOME APPREHENSIVE ABOUT THE WORK NEEDED TO ADMINISTER IT. THE FORECAST BY THOSE IN MEA DIRECTLY CONNECTED WITH THE PROJECT IS THAT IT WILL DIE A NATURAL DEATH. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, THE SAME OFFICIALS WARN THAT 'IN NIGERIA ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN'. A SUDDEN DEMAND FOR ACTION FROM YAR 'ADUA OR OBASANJO MIGHT YET CAUSE A HASTY PUBLICATION OF RIGID RULES.
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Sent Date: 23-Dec-1977 12:00:00 am
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